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THE ASIAN STRUGGLE.

The news from the Orient during the past week has been so conflicting that it is difficult to understand the real situation, except that Russia is fencing for time and Japan is hurrying her preparations to strik the Russians by land and sea so soon as she can get her forces in position. It seems to us that for the present, Russia is in a most precarious position in the East. She has it seems superceded her admiral there, but it appears plain that the personnel of the Russian crews—the men behind the guns—do not compare with those on the Japanese ships. In this respect there seems to be as great a discrepency as there was between the Spanish and Americans at Manila Bay and off Santiago. Ambitionless conscripts are pitted against alert, thinking and passionately patriotic men fighting for life and for deliverance from a vastly more numerous and merciless enemy. With one successful, great land battle on the part of Japan, it would not be a week until Russia's single railroad would be cut-off and then the surrender of Port Arthur would be inevitable.

Russia has retired its Asian headquarters to Harbin, which is 600 miles north of Port Arthur and about the same distance west of Vladivostok and Harbin is henceforth to be her base. That amounts almost to an admission that her fleet cannot protect Port Arthur and that her land forces cannot prevent the tearing up of her railroad tracks north of Port Arthur. It is an old trick on the part of Russia when defeated on the sea-shore to retire to her interior fastnesses; but what kind of statesmanship must have ruled in St. Petersburg, when Russian refusal to deal openly and squarely with Japan, finally caused the anger and mistrust that precipitated the war, and found Russia helpless to meet its exactions?

One disquieting dispatch was received during the week, to the effect that a high Chinese official had expressed the belief that China's sympathies were all with Japan and that in a little while China would cease to be neutral. Were China to join in the war, it would not be three weeks until all the great powers of Europe would be in accord for the purpose of partitioning China. In that event it would require the exercise of most superior statesmanship in Washington to keep our own country from becoming embroiled.

All the indications point to trouble in Southeastern Europe with the opening of the spring. Mars surely seems to be in the ascendant in the Old World, and the millennium seems to be as far away as it was when the cross was first upreared. If the Moslem hive is really swarming that fact will soon be the concernment of all Europe, for it will mean Ancient merciless Asia in array against Christian Europe. It is a striking fact that the spirit which dominates Asia does not change with the centuries. The old law of might is the only one appealed to and when it triumphs it is followed by the same cruelties that followed in the wake of the victories of old Cambyres. The wild beast in man is still dominant. The situation is not a cheerful one for men who believe in free government and the natural rights of man.

SHIPS AND SHIPPING.

The Hon. Richard-Kerens, while here, told a press representative that the late Senator Hanna was greatly interested in the rehabilitation of the merchant marine of this country, and then, as reported, said: "Fifty or sixty years ago our country controlled a large percentage of the carrying business of the sea." He then explained that Senator Hanna thought it most important to the nation that the same condition should be restored.

A great many people of this latter generation cannot understand why, after the United States had acquired more tonnage on the sea than any other power, if allowed itself to fall so far behind in the world's carrying trade. The facts are very simple. Up to the time that steamships became a success, there was no trouble. The United States could build ships cheaper than foreign countries; those ships employed but few men, comparatively speaking, and our flag was everywhere. In the '40s the Cunard Company put on its steamship line between Liverpool and Boston, and later to New York. It was subsidized by the British government. Then the Collins American Company was inaugurated, and, despite the loss of two fine ships, held its own until the subsidy was taken away in Buchanan's administration, leaving the Cunarders without a rival. An old law gave the coasting trade between American ports of American-built ships. When there was a rush of 300,000 people to California, the supplying of that host caused the building up of the great fleet of clipper and half-clipper ships wihch were so famous in the '50s, and which caused the aggregate ocean tonnage of the United States to exceed that of any other nation. Then came the invention of the compound marine engine, which reduced the consumption of fuel for steamships 47 per cent (which invention was rejected by our naval engineers but was accepted by the British); the perfection of the screw propeller; the substitution of iron for wooden ships, and finally our great civil war, which caused the transfer of our merchant ships to other flags. While the war raged Great Britain established steam lines with all the important ports of the world. After the close of the war it was not long until the Democrats had control of the House of Representatives, and they would do nothing to help build up either the navy or the merchant marine. The old navy left after the war was soon obsolete, and it ran down so low that our government had to bear a direct snub from Spain, and when our country sympathized with Peru in her war with Chili, Chili made a covert threat that she would send an ironclad up and bombard San Francisco, which she could have done.

At last, in the Arthur administration, money enough was appropriated to build three or four small cruisers, which were on the ways when Mr. Cleveland became President. With the Democratic administration, Congress ordered the building of two battleships and several cruisers, and the beginning of the creation of a navy was begun; also some contracts for carrying ocean mails in American steamers were made.

But anything like the adoption of the means through which Great Britain, Germany and France have been enabled to multiply their merchant ships has been steadily fought with the cry that it means a ship trust. As a result American ships are confined to the coast trade. Now, in Galveston, New Orleans, even New York, there are fifteen foreign flags floating over foreign ships to one American. A gentleman told the writer of this last week that he was in Galveston a year ago. There were twenty-three great ships there loading and unloading, but that only two American flags were in evidence. He went over to Vera Cruz, and there the discrepency was still greater. The result is that the freight on the tremendous volume of products which our country sends away and purchases from abroad are paid to foreign shipowners. Not only is the money sent away, but thousands of American workingmen who should be busy building and repairing ships are forced into other avocations. Will the country ever get a little sense and demand a change?

ALVENZO HAYWARD.

Alvenzo Hayward died in San Francisco a few days ago. His life story would make a book that would read more like a romance than a reality. He was an Argonaut; he went to California with the first host; at that time the Golden State was a land of enchantment that seemed to challenge the young men to try, and at the same time it seemed to promise fulfillment for all that man hoped for and earnestly tried to attain.

Hayward became a miner. About 1854 he was running a tunnel to tap a lode in Amador county. He spent all his means, then strained his credit to the utmost. Men looked at him and shook their heads. To them he was a visionary, working on an impossibility. At last he was refused credit for a sack of flour. He was hungry, and put up so earnest a plea for the accommodation, that the merchant finally gave him the flour with the understanding that he should make no more appeals for credit. He did not have to. Before that flour was exhausted he struck the ledge. It was not any ordinary ledge—it seemed to have just quartz enough in it to hold the gold in place. In a few days his credit was good for a thousand sacks of flour; in a few months he was a millionaire. He was a shrewd, careful man. Since then he has opened many mines; he has lost much money, but has made more than he has lost; he has always been a public-spirited, high-minded man. His charities were manifold, but the way he loved most to spend money was to get behind men who were nearing the point he reached when that last